

Hillcrest HealthCare News®

A newsletter for our patients, their families and friends

Spring 2013



Hearing Loss in the News

Your Healthy Hearing Check-up

Regular hearing health check-ups ensure that you're hearing as well as possible. A comprehensive check-up includes the following:

- 1. Hearing test.** We'll compare the results to your previous hearing levels. If we find any change, we'll recommend treatment or program your hearing aids to compensate for the change.
- 2. Ear canal examination.** Earwax is one of the most common causes of hearing aid feedback (whistle) and hearing aid repairs.
- 3. Cleaning and adjusting your hearing aids.** Regular cleaning minimizes hearing aid repairs and makes sure that your hearing aids are providing the maximum benefit. *Sometimes a small re-programming of your hearing aids can make a noticeable improvement in your hearing.*
- 4. Reviewing other sources of help.** This is a good time to ask about telephone amplifiers, clock and smoke alarms, and devices for television and group settings.

Your hearing deserves good care! Please call our office to schedule an appointment.

Hearing health received a lot of attention in the media during the past year. This isn't surprising, since hearing loss is one of the three most common health issues in this country.

News media such as *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, AARP's monthly magazine and *Consumer Reports* covered such topics as the problem and treatment of tinnitus, earwax removal, advances in hearing aid technology, the subtle effects of background noise, and the importance of getting treatment for hearing loss.

According to the AARP report, while nearly 90% of individuals 50 years of age or older think good hearing is important, less than 45% have had their hearing checked in the past five years. The author's recommendation: if friends and family comment about your hearing, schedule a professional hearing evaluation. Getting help can lead to great results: 75% of hearing aid users said their hearing aids had made an important improvement in their lives.

Health columnist Jane Brody wrote in *The New York Times* about the social isolation and frustration caused by untreated hearing loss. She described

how hearing aids help keep someone with hearing loss socially and mentally engaged.

We know that exposure to loud noise can damage hearing, but an article in the *Wall Street Journal* described how even moderate levels of noise—such as aircraft noise—can increase heart rates (an indicator of stress) and interfere with attention. A *Consumer Reports* article identified noise as the most common complaint about restaurants.

Not all noise is bad, though. Another *WSJ* article described how consumer product companies pay close attention to the sound their products make in order to attract and please consumers. There is the obvious "snap, crackle, pop" of Rice

"Less than 45% of adults have had their hearing tested."

Krispies. But there is also the subtle but carefully engineered "click" when closing the top of a mascara tube, the loud "pop" when you open a bottle of Snapple, the reassuring "thunk" of a car door closing. Apparently these sounds don't just happen.

Sound and hearing are important, not just for understanding the people around us and enjoying music and television, but for staying in touch with our environment. Hearing as well as possible is important—so take good care of it!

See Less, Hear More

According to one study, people with impaired vision are able to localize sound in space better than people with normal sight.

The results don't mean they have better hearing sensitivity. Instead, apparently people with vision impairment have learned to make better use of their hearing, perhaps because of their greater need for information based on sound.

Tips for Hearing Aid Users

- Older hearing aids needed repair more frequently due to ear wax getting inside the instrument. Most hearing aids now have wax guards, but occasionally these can become clogged with wax. If you try a new battery and your hearing aid doesn't work, replacing the wax guard may solve the problem.
- Feedback**—that whistling sound made by a hearing aid—should not occur unless you cup your hand over the hearing aid or bring a telephone too close. A build-up of earwax, which blocks the amplified sound, can also cause feedback. A loose fitting ear mold or receiver could also be the culprit.
- The quality of sound on television ranges from excellent to terrible, and varies from channel to channel on the same set. Almost all television sets have built-in captioning that displays on the screen a written text of what is being said. The captioning is available simply by turning it on through the remote control.
- Travel tip:** Bring along a small drier jar to keep your hearing aids secure at night. Be sure to bring plenty of batteries and even a spare set of hearing aids. You probably won't need back-up hearing aids, but at least you won't have to worry, "What if..."

Hearing Loss in Infants and Children

More than a million children in the United States have significant hearing loss. Even a mild hearing loss can affect a child's speech and language development, make it more difficult to understand what family members are saying, and interfere with performance in the classroom.

Most cases of hearing loss in children are *conductive*, caused by fluid in the middle ear. The inner ear is not affected. The loss is usually temporary and can be treated medically with antibiotics, or surgically by inserting a ventilation tube into the eardrum. Middle ear infection accompanied by conductive hearing loss is one of the most common problems seen by pediatricians. About 80% of all children will experience some degree of conductive loss due to middle ear infection before the age of five, but usually there are no long-term effects.

Sensorineural loss can also occur and is more serious because it affects the inner ear and is usually permanent. Often the loss is inherited, although both parents may have normal hearing. Hearing aids, audiologic rehabilitation, and speech and language

"More than 90% of newborns are screened for hearing loss."

therapy may be needed to help the child develop speech, language, hearing and academic skills.

Infant Hearing Testing

Early detection and early intervention are crucial to minimize the effects of hearing loss on a child. The earlier the loss is found, the

earlier help can be provided and the sooner the child will begin to hear the sounds and voices around him.

Fortunately, modern audiologic test procedures can identify hearing loss even in infants. Using computer-assisted equipment to measure the ear's "echo" to sound or to measure the ear's nerve activity (an "EEG of the auditory system"), these testing procedures are effective and reliable at screening for hearing loss in infants. In the United States, more than 90% of newborns now receive hearing screening before discharge.

With the increased emphasis on early detection, improved testing procedures, and early treatment, children with hearing loss today have a much better chance at developing normal speech and language and doing well throughout their school years.

New Year, New Location!

We're excited to announce the grand opening of our **new location in Dayton, Ohio!** Our new location is located near the **University of Dayton** at the intersection of **South Patterson Boulevard** and **Stewart Street**. The office features a welcoming atmosphere, spacious exam rooms, and state-of-the-art equipment.

1222 South Patterson Boulevard
Dayton, Ohio 45402
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We are no longer seeing patients in our former office located on First Street in downtown Dayton, Ohio. We look forward to helping you achieve better hearing for a better life at our newest location and continuing our nearly 50 year tradition of providing excellence in hearing health care to this region!

Sincerely,

The Audiologists, Dispensers and Staff of Hillcrest Hearing Aids & Balance Center
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